

REMARKS

Applicants have amended the specification to correct several typographical errors. Applicants have amended claims 1, 3, 8, 15, 16, 23, 24, and 25 to correct informalities. Applicants have also amended claim 9. No new matter has been entered by way of these amendments. Applicants have also added new claims 27-38. Support for the added claims can be found at page 5, line 22 through page 6, line 8. In view of these amendments and the following remarks, Applicants hereby respectfully request reconsideration of the application, and allowance of claims 1-38.

The Office has rejected claims 1-2, 4-10, 12-18 and 20-26 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,480,885 to Olivier ("Olivier") and has rejected claims 3, 11, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Olivier in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,651,086 to Manber et al. ("Manber"). The Office asserts that Olivier in col. 9, lines 50-54, teaches an information stream monitoring system comprising: an information monitoring device that monitors one or more electronic documents in an information stream, and compares information about the one or more electronic documents to at least one rule; and teaches in col. 5, lines 27-31, a forum spawning device that queries a set of users when at least one of the at least one rules is satisfied; and teaches in col. 9, lines 56-61 and col. 3, lines 29, creates a forum based on one or more replies from the set of users. The Office acknowledges that Olivier fails to teach wherein the forum spawning device queries the set of users to determine the need for the new forum. However, the Office asserts that Manber teaches a system and method for matching participants to a conversation wherein the forum spawning device queries the set of users to determine the need for the new forum, and that it would have been obvious to one with ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate wherein the forum spawning device queries the set of users to determine the need for the new forum as taught by Manber, into the claimed invention of Olivier, in order to connect two or more individuals to a forum based on their mutual interests.

Neither Olivier nor Manber, alone or in combination, suggest or disclose, "an information monitoring device that monitors one or more electronic documents in an information stream, and compares information about the one or more electronic documents to at least one rule" as recited in claim 1, or "monitoring one or more electronic documents in an information stream . . . comparing information about the one or more electronic documents to

at least one rule” as recited in claim 9, or “information that monitors one or more electronic documents in an information stream . . . information that compares information about the one or more electronic documents to at least one rule” as recited in claim 17 or “an information monitoring device for monitoring data associated with electronic documents in an information stream, the information monitoring device adapted to compare the data from the electronic documents according to a rule” as recited in claim 26. Applicants respectfully direct the Office’s attention to column 5, lines 22-32 in Olivier which states, “At block 208, a user visits the web site and subscribes to a mailing list, specifying user profile data and acceptance criteria data that control with whom and about what topics they wish to interact. The system stores this and other subscription information in the database. At block 212, one or more servers calculate the degree of matches between the user and every other user, by doing a one way or two-way match between users, using their profile data and acceptance criteria data.” The Office’s attention is also respectfully directed to col. 9, lines 50-54 in Olivier which states, “At block 448 the server analyzes all subscription records in the subscription table to calculate the degree of matches between the user profile data of the newly subscribing user and the acceptance criteria of each user already subscribed to this particular mailing list.” Accordingly, in Olivier the system or server looks for matches using stored profile data, not information in an information stream and further does not teach or suggest comparing information from that information stream to one or more rules. As described on page 5, line 22, through page 6, line 8, of the above-identified patent application, the information stream comprises information, such as electronic messages and postings to bulletin boards. By using the stored profile data in Olivier, instead of the information stream, Olivier will filter out all subjects that were not anticipated by the user and registered for by the user during the subscription phase. For example, in Olivier a user may initially limit her acceptance criteria to accept messages only discussing “my school.” A sub-forum may later be spawned from the user’s school’s forum about a “new school” and how it affects the user’s school. However, because the user initially limited her acceptance criteria to “my school” she will not receive messages about the “new school” even though they would have been of interest to her. With the present invention, the user will be notified of and can take part in new forums can be spawned regarding unanticipated topics.

Applicants now respectfully direct the Office’s attention to Figure 2 and lines 57-63 of column 1 in Manber which disclose a system and method allowing a user who wants to start or join a new internet conversation about a particular topic to do so by selecting an

indicator associated with the topic. The indicator may be an icon or a text link inviting other users to join a conversation. In contrast to the above-identified application which recites an information monitoring device that monitors one or more electronic documents in an information stream and compares information about the one or more electronic documents to at least one rule, Manber discloses a user that must manually monitor a forum. Moreover, Manber does not disclose comparing information about the one or more electronic messages to at least one rule as in the present invention, but rather discloses a user that makes comparisons based on subjective criteria.

Accordingly, in view of the foregoing remarks, the Office is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1, 9, 17 and 26. Because claims 2-8, 27, 31 and 35 depend from and contain the limitations of claim 1, claims 10-16, 28, 32 and 36 depend from and contain the limitations of claim 9, claims 18-25, 29, 33 and 37 depend from and contain the limitations of claim 17, and claims 30, 34 and 38 depend from and contain the limitations of claim 26, they are patentable in the same manner as claims 1, 9, 17 and 26.

Additionally, neither Olivier nor Manber, alone or in combination, suggest or disclose, “wherein the information stream is an electronic forum and wherein the one or more electronic documents are one or more electronic messages” as recited in new claims 27-30 or “wherein the information stream is an electronic forum comprising one or more electronic messages flowing between two or more of the users” as recited in new claims 31-34. Applicants again respectfully direct the Office’s attention to Olivier at Figure 5A; lines 50-54 of column 9; and lines 22-32 of column 5. As discussed above with reference to claims 1, 9, 17 and 26, Olivier discloses a system which looks for matches using stored profile data, not by monitoring electronic messages in an electronic forum. Similarly, as described in greater detail above, Manber does not teach or suggest the claimed invention.

Additionally, neither Olivier nor Manber, alone or in combination, suggest or disclose, “wherein the...rule comprises at least one of the following: how long the current discussion forum has been in use; how many messages have been exchanged on the forum; whether there has been a suggestion to create a new discussion forum; whether a certain number of messages on a particular topic been received within a predetermined time period; whether the rate of messages exchanged on a particular topic been statistically greater than normal; or whether a certain number of forum members exchanged messages on a particular

topic within a predetermined time period” as recited in claims 35-38. As discussed above with reference to claims 1, 9, 17 and 26, Olivier does not teach or suggest comparing information from an information stream to one or more rules, let alone disclose the types of rules comprised. Similarly, as described in greater detail above, Manber does not teach or suggest the claimed invention.

Finally, neither Olivier nor Manber, alone or in combination, suggest or disclose “wherein the forum spawning device queries the set of users to determine the need for the new forum” as recited in claim 3, or “querying the set of users determines need for the new forum” as recited in claim 11 or “querying the set of users determines need for the new forum” as recited in claim 19. The Office acknowledges that Olivier fails to teach wherein the forum spawning device queries the set of users to determine the need for the new forum.

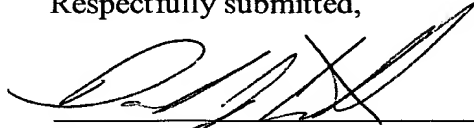
Applicants now direct the Office’s attention to lines 57 - 62 of column 1 and lines 20 – 30 of column 2 in Manber which disclose a method and system in which a user must manually probe other users, and must subjectively determine whether to start or join a conversation. Manber does not disclose the forum spawning device queries the set of users. Moreover, Manber does not query a set of users upon satisfaction of a rule but rather relies on the subjective judgment of a user to initiate a probe.

The above-identified application at page 4, lines 3-15, recites a forum spawning device that “queries the set of users to determine the need for the new forum,” without user intervention. Moreover, the present invention queries a set of users when at least one rule is satisfied. The approach of embodiments of the above-identified application is advantageous because it does not require a user to query new users, and does not rely on the subjective judgment of any particular user to determine the need for a new forum. In view of the foregoing remarks, the Office is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 3, 11 and 19.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that this case is in condition for allowance and such allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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